

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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COUNTRY Siam - French Indo China

DATE: 25X1A6a

INFO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Views expressed by Baron Patrick Surcouf

DIST. 17 December 1946

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SUPPLEMENT

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ORIGIN [REDACTED]

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1. Baron Surcouf asserted the United States must back up France on her policy in Indo China, because if France should ever lose her foothold there, it will not only be the end of the white race in Asia, but all Southeast Asia will become Communistic. The Viet Nam is now just a tool of the Russians; the Russians are considered (by the Vietnamese ?) as yellow, not white.
2. The entire Viet Nam movement was started by the Japanese; in fact all the Viet Nam troops were trained and armed by the Japanese. At present there are many Japanese fighting with the Vietnamese, and there is a large Japanese camp near Hanoi. In reply to a query as to why the French did not clear out this Japanese camp if such existed, Baron Surcouf stated the French would not undertake such an operation during the period of the modus vivendi, and that they had not done anything before the modus vivendi came into effect because the camp was too strong to attack.
3. Surcouf stated it was very wrong of the Vietnamese to use Japanese troops against the French, but that this was a very different problem from the question of the French using German troops in the French Foreign Legion against the Vietnamese. He said the Foreign Legion had contained Germans ever since its inception; they were mercenaries and their use had no political implications, whereas the Japanese influenced the Viet Nam troops

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politically.

4. Before the war, according to Baron Surcouf, the Annamites were very content under French domination. Because of French medical aid the population had increased several millions; wonderful schools, highways, etc. had been built for them, and the country had been prosperous. He declared it was extremely ungrateful of them to fail to appreciate all the effort of the French. When it was suggested the annamites had never asked for French domination in the first place and therefore there was no real reason for them to be grateful, Baron Surcouf said he supposed this was true.
5. During the period ^{when} he was resident of Southern Laos, Baron Surcouf stated he had done everything he could to help the Laos because he was fond of them as a race. The Annamites had been a great problem; whenever a group came into an area, the Laos would move away. To protect the Laos, he would not allow the annamites to come in unless there was a specified piece of ground for them to occupy without displacing the Laos.
6. He stated the Laos were such a gentle and poetic race that they would be lost without French protection and would become the prey of the Chinese or the annamites. He said the race would probably vanish if allowed to become independent and stand on their own feet.
7. Baron Surcouf asserted he did not know why the Laos were so vehement about obtaining their freedom, when the French promised two years ago to make them an autonomous state. He was surprised to learn the Laos had never been informed of this, but said they should have had sense enough to wait before acting hastily and fighting the French.
8. In regard to the annamites, Baron Surcouf stated they were really dangerous, because they thought nothing of murdering women and children and had massacred hundreds of Frenchmen. He said he used to be very fond of the Siamese, but since they had attacked Indo China when France was down and out, he did not feel so kindly toward them; in addition, they had been tools of the Japanese during that period. When it was suggested the French had done a little land snatching, beginning in 1860 when Siam was not a powerful nation, Baron Surcouf stated the situation was entirely different and that a long time before that the Siamese had grabbed Cambodian territories and now the French were only attempting to get these territories back for the Cambodians by peaceful means. He declared the Free Cambodians were not members of a liberation movement, but were merely bandits. He said Cambodia had her King and had held her own elections and there was no reason for such a movement.
9. The Siem Reap incident (7-8 August 1946) was, according to Baron Surcouf, pure maliciousness and banditry. He stated the bandits, which he referred to as Siamese, had attacked a hospital full of women, children and invalid troops. It was suggested the hospital was in reality a hotel which, as late as April at least, had been full of robust French officers, soldiers and a few women; the object of the Free Cambodians had been to capture the French arsenal at Siem Reap and to do so they had to attack all French installations in the area. Baron Surcouf stated he had never heard that version of the incident.

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